

狂三スターフェスティバル

KURUMI Star Festival

Date A Live Encore

"It's.....really crowded here huh."

Shido walked leisurely while looking at the streets on his left and right.

Reflected in his eyes was the shopping district that was more lively than usual.

That was to be expected, that's because today is the seventh day of the seventh month. An annual festival known as Tanabata, shopkeepers who love holidays like these the most would of course not let such a chance to make a roaring business escape, they have already raised quite an excitement in the district long ago.

Open air stalls have long been set up on both sides of the street, not only were there takoyaki and yakisoba that are said to be indispensable in festivals, the various items on sale were also extremely appealing. There was no end to the flow of visitors, resulting in the entire district being packed with people.

Shido was not the kind of person to feel excited from festivals, however it was different when he is placed in a location where there are stalls everywhere. Although the festive spirit would not cause the price of the goods to fall, it will however cause the stall owners to start some off-record advertising that would be beneficial to those that visit.

Since the arrival of the gourmand Tohka, the cost of meals of the Itsuka residence have been under the subsidization of <Ratatoskr>, but the amount and quality of food aside, to resolve their daily meals at the lowest cost possible—as the sole person in charge of the Itsuka residence's kitchen, that was Shido's important mission.

At this moment, Shido felt pitiful as he became aware that he was displaying an aura of a mature housekeeping husband.....However it is pointless for him to complain about it now. Shido let out his depressed feelings with a huge sigh, after which he revealed a face of that of a housewife that was just about to go and hunt for bargains in the district.

It was an usual everyday event for Shido.

After this Shido would only need to go to the stores that he commonly frequents as usual, chat with the enthusiastic storekeepers for a while before carrying the groceries back home and make dinner for the girls back home.

—At least that was how it was supposed to be.

However, at that moment.

"Eh——?"

At the edge of his vision, on the opposite side of the street, Shido spotted something out of the ordinary.

"Wha....."

At the same time, before his brain could register what that existence was, Shido's body stiffened, as though he had been frozen to the spot.

At the other side of the wide sea of people that filled the shopping district.

A young girl wearing a black one-piece dress, stood there.

Long hair that just happened to rest on her shoulders, a slender figure, the left side of her face was covered by her fringe akin to that of a waterfall, exposing

her right eye that seemed to be unfathomable as a black hole as well as lips that were as delicate as sakura petals. With all that beauty, there was a devilish-like charm capable of enslaving men the moment eye contact was made.

However——that was not the case.

The reason why Shido was so shocked till the point that he was unable to move the a few seconds, was not just because of the girl's looks.

"Tokisaki——Kurumi.....?"

Shido said the girl's name with a shocked tone, at the same time, swallowing his saliva to relive his dry throat.

——Tokisaki Kurumi.

The girl who had transferred into Shido's class roughly a month ago, who had also intended to [devour] Shido, the spirit who had planned to take the power of the spirits sealed inside of him for herself was the very girl in front of his eyes, Tokisaki Kurumi.

Possessing a brutal and competitive personality, she was different from Tohka and Yoshino who unintentionally cause spacequakes which endangers human lives, Tokisaki Kurumi had killed countless humans out of her own free will.....she was also known as——[the most dangerous Spirit].

Not too long ago she had lost her left arm and part of her Angel after suffering a hit from Kotori's attack, her whereabouts have been unknown since then. However the one in front of his eyes right now, her left arm was unharmed and intact.

".....Eh."

Shido couldn't help but rub his eyes.

It was probably just to reassure himself, but he had a small wish that he had seen wrongly.

After that Shido blinked his eyes a few times, when he turned back to look at the street once more.....

The black figure of the girl was already gone.

"Wh, what's with that.....so it was my imagination after all——"

"——Good evening, Shido-san."

"Uwah!?"

Before Shido could even manage to heave a sigh of relief, a voice suddenly called out to him from behind, causing him to jump.

After that, he hastily turned around, standing right there, was the girl who had been on the other side of the street just a few minutes before.

"Kurumi.....!?"

"Yes, it has been a while, Shido-san."

Saying that, Kurumi revealed an intoxicating smile, lifting her skirt slightly and bent her knees, she bowed to Shido.

Shido on the other hand was forcing his erratic heartbeat to calm down, he firmly stared into Kurumi's visible right eye before inquiring.

"Wh, why are you.....in a place like this?"

If he was maintaining contact with Kotori like he usually did, he would most likely be lectured for uttering such a pointless question.

The corner of Kurumi's lips slowly rose, she gazed at Shido's face, replying his question in a whisper.

"Isn't that obvious—I am here to meet with Shido-san of course."

".....!"

Shido immediately held his breath, hastily stepping back at the same time.

Kurumi came to meet Shido.

That means—— her goal is to.....

However, as a normal human of flesh and blood, it is impossible to escape from Kurumi's clutches, Shido understands this fact very well.

Although there are humans as far as one could see surrounding the two of them, but to Kurumi who is a Spirit, she probably would not care about being seen by eyewitnesses. No..... in the worst case scenario, if she wanted to, she could abduct everybody including Shido into the shadows, picking him out after that would be an extremely simple task.

With his thoughts up to this point, Shido gritted his teeth as he looked back at Kurumi. Due to the irregular existence before his eyes, a normal everyday scene has now transformed into one with a bleak future with a blink of an eye. What exactly should he do to——

".....?"

But, at that moment, Kurumi suddenly reached out her arm, holding Shido's hand with her own.

"Fufu.....hey, Shido-san?"

Kurumi's face had an enchanting smile, her fingers slowly wrapped around Shido's hand, That expression of hers, it was as though she had seen through Shido's thoughts, a chill went down his spine.

Alas, he had tried everything he had, Shido thought to himself, faced with such a dire situation it looks like he was all out of options.

However——Kurumi said something that was entirely out of his expectations, as though ignoring the despair that has clouded Shido's heart.

"——May we go out on a date? Right now?"

Kurumi pulled on Shido's hand while moving her lips near his ear, she whispered to him.

"Ha.....?"

Faced with this unexpected invitation, Shido couldn't help but widen his eyes.

"Kurumi, wh, what did you say just now.....?"

"Fufu, really now Shido-san, requesting a girl to say such words a second time, you really are insensitive."

Saying that, Kurumi tilted her head mischievously to one side.

"A.....date?"

"That's right, I just want to go out and play with Shido-san, can't I?"

"No, it's just....."

Shido was speechless.

Kurumi had proactively invited him to a date.

—From a normal viewpoint, this was an extremely dangerous situation.

However, Shido was hesitant as well.

He would be lying if he said that he was not afraid of Kurumi. After all she was a malicious Spirit who had murdered countless humans before, if she wished to decapitate Shido, it would be but a simple task for her to do so.

Even so, deep down inside Shido's heart, there was a strong urge to converse with Kurumi once more, an urge to get her to confide in him.

This feeling overrode his fear of death.

"....."

However, in response to Shido's silence, Kurumi seemed to have misinterpreted something.

"Ara ara, it seems that Shido-san is still doubting me.....How lamentable, but it can't be helped. No matter who it is, they probably would not want to go on a date with someone who had attempted to kill them before. However——"

Midway through her sentence, Kurumi bent forward slightly, gazing up at Shido with a humble expression while continuing her words.

"Please be at ease, I came here with no intention of doing any harm to Shido-san for today. If you really do not trust me no matter what I do, it is alright to use chains to restrain my hands or even wrapping a bomb around my throat is fine too you know?"

"No no no, how could I do that to you....."

Upon noticing Shido's fluster, Kurumi widened her eyes as though she was acting in a play, she hid her face with her hands displaying a posture of dismay.

"Then that means, Shido-san just hates me and isn't willing to go out with me? Sob sob, I'm so sad, I feel like I am going to cry."

"Eh.....! I, I said nothing of the sort!"

"Waa——"

"Hey hey hey....."

Shido scratched the back of his head with a troubled expression.

It was obvious that Kurumi was acting suspiciously. Of course, in Kurumi's case, she could very well be just playing a prank on him..... But for some reason, the

atmosphere that Kurumi was currently giving out was somehow different from that of the most dangerous spirit he had met weeks before.

Furthermore.....Kurumi did say it before, that she has no intention of harming Shido today.

It was only a verbal promise, she could go back on her word at anytime, there was no way to ascertain that she will keep her promise.

However, for as long as Shido could remember, although, Kurumi's words often had a hidden meaning behind them, she would occasionally speak in a roundabout way but she has never went back on her word before.

Most importantly, the current situation still remains extremely dangerous for him, if he were to reject her invitation now, making her unhappy, that would spell digging his own grave. Before he could even utter "I'm sorry.", he probably would have been dragged into the shadows by several arms.

".....Alright then, I'll go on a date with you."

Once Shido said that, Kurumi's expression instantly brightened.

"Really?"

Kurumi's feelings of jubilation could be felt from not just her expressions but her words as well, just like a blooming flower that had nothing to hide, Shido couldn't help but be surprised at this. Although he had already thought up some countermeasures for the various situations that may happen.....but he was at a loss upon witnessing her behaving like this.

"Fufu, I'm so happy, Shido-san really is a gentle person."

Kurumi happily chirped while reaching out and hugging Shido's arm.

"Wah! Ku, Kurumi!? Wh....."

The sudden turn of events, caused Shido to cry out in surprise, blushing furiously like a maiden in love. Despite the fact that she was the most dangerous spirit, Kurumi still looked like a frail girl. If she made such a bold action all of a sudden, as a healthy highschool boy, how could Shido handle her?

"Um, I say, isn't this a little too intimate.....?"

"Is that so?"

However, Kurumi merely smiled at Shido's fluster, sticking closer to Shido.

"I don't see any problem——, after all we are in a date right now. Fufu, for the moment.....only for this moment, Shido-san is my man. Or are you saying.....that you are feeling disgusted, with me hugging your arm like this?"

Kurumi asked in a depressed voice, this caused an unexplainable sense of guilt to form in Shido's heart, he couldn't help but groan as he frowned.

"That's not it, I won't push you away....."

"Is that so. Fufu, then let's hurry up and go."

Saying that, Kurumi started walking ahead. Under the lead of her petite figure, Shido was half-pulled into the bustling streets.

——Tanabata.

Just like Hikoboshi and Orihime who are separated by the vast Milky Way.
Wading through the wide streets, weaving past the dense human crowd—
The youth and the maiden, finally meet once more.

".....Umm, Kurumi. You said that this was a date, but where on earth are we headed?"

After walking for an unknown period of time, Shido finally couldn't help but open his mouth and inquire.

"Hm, actually there's a place that I'd like to visit."

"A place that you'd like to go? Where?"

"Fufu, I'm keeping it a secret for now."

At the same time, Kurumi did not forget to put her finger to her lips. Witnessing Kurumi making such a cute action, Shido felt his heart flutter.

However at this juncture, he immediately reminded himself. Although this chance to interact with Kurumi could be a rare opportunity, her danger level did not decrease due to this. Being with her means that a moment of carelessness could very well mean instant death.

Just as Shido was contemplating about this, Kurumi who was dragging Shido suddenly stopped in her footsteps.

Following that, she showed a cunning smile, the tip of her tongue circled her lips, her eyes were directed straight at Shido.

"——Aaah, aaah. Sure looks.....delicious."

".....!!"

Those words, caused Shido's wariness to rise.

"What.....don't tell me, you really intend to——"

His voice trembling in fear, Shido tried to pull away from Kurumi. However Kurumi's arms were akin to chains, refusing to let go of Shido for even a single millimeter.

"Ah, ah——"

Kurumi chuckled, her lips forming a crescent, she then pointed her finger——at the open-air stall behind Shido.

The stall was selling snacks named [Bamboo Leaf Cakes]. Within these bite-sized cakes, fillings such as red bean paste or cream were added. It did seem very appealing.

"Hey, Shido-san. Don't you think that that looks delectable as well?"

"Eh? So you were referring to.....ca, cake.....?"

"——Oh my, what in the world did you think I was talking about?"

Shido's expression instantly relaxed. Upon witnessing his strange reaction, she couldn't help but giggle.....haa, it somehow feels like he was a clown in Kurumi's hands.

"I, I'm telling you....."

"Fufufu, but, it really makes you hungry, right? Just look, there are so many weird things everywhere. That one over there seems to be called [Milky Way Shaved Ice]."

Shido looked at the direction Kurumi indicated, there was indeed a stall that was selling shaved ice with Blue Hawaii syrup with condensed milk on top.

"Ahh.....so that's how it is, so that's their representation of the Milky Way, it is rather creative."

"Look, the [Orihime Cotton Candy]."

"Linking cotton candy with cloth weaving? This one seems a little forced....."

"That one over there seems to be [Hikoboshi's Beef Jerky]."

"This.....a cowherd shouldn't be eating beef."

Merchants are really pulling out all the stops, Shido frowned, sweat formed on his cheek.

Kurumi put her hand to her mouth, showing a slight smile.

"Fufu, being together with Shido-san like this, really makes me happy."

"No, I'm not really doing....."

However, without even waiting for him to finish, Kurumi once again towed Shido at his elbow.

"Let's go this way, Shido-san."

"Wah, Kurumi, don't pull me!"

"Fufufu, time waits for no one don't you know? Come on, Shido-san. Let's treasure the short period of time we have together."

Kurumi walked on with a smiling face, with Shido right behind her, they weaved through the shopping district.

Following that was another fifteen minutes on foot, Kurumi pointed at the building in front and spoke to Shido.

"This is the place."

"This place is.....oh, the planetarium?"

That's right, in front of the two was the planetarium that was located slightly further away from the shopping district.

"Yes, I've been longing to have a look for a long time now."

"Is that so.....This is rather unexpected."

"Ara, what do you mean?"

"Ah, no....."

Shido was in the middle of thought as to what excuse to make before making a sudden realization—he was shocked at himself for being relaxed enough to be able to joke around with Kurumi.

No, he probably did not let down his guard at all. However, from the shopping district to this point, he did not feel any feelings of hostility or violence from Kurumi at all, this somehow caused him to lose his sense of wariness.

That's right, the Kurumi today is really just a normal girl.

Happily linking arms whilst engaging in conversation, smiling in bliss.....all those normal activities.

Such normality—being together for such a short period of time, had caused Shido to forget the bloody struggle last month.

"....."

Shido wordlessly focused on Kurumi.

.....He has no idea what is going on in her mind. Is she planning on [consuming] Shido once he let down his guard? But if that was the case, what kind of motive does Kurumi have to do this in such a roundabout way? She would only have to pull him into the shadows the instant their eyes met to achieve that goal. If that was the case, then why? She couldn't have really been just hoping for a date.....? No, that way of thinking would be even more foolish. Since she made contact with Shido knowing full well that she may be discovered by <Ratatoskr>, then she must have some goal in mind—

".....? Shido-san? What's the matter?"

"Ah.....it's nothing. Let's go in, Kurumi."

Shido hid his hesitant feelings from Kurumi, walking into the planetarium together.

Purchasing two tickets, they located their seats and sat down. Not long after the lights in the planetarium went out, the guide's voice resonated in the darkness.

"—We're very thankful for your presence in the planetarium today. Our program for today is—"

After the scripted greetings, on top of the semi-circle dome ceiling, countless stars began to shine.

"Wow....."

A voice of amazement sounded out from beside him, Shido couldn't resist moving his vision from the ceiling to the source.

Next to him, Kurumi's eyes were shining with a glittering sparkle, she did not avert her gaze, staring at the countless dazzling stars above her in a daze.

"....."

Upon witnessing her innocence, Shido scratched his cheek.....giving out a small sigh, before returning his gaze to the ceiling.

.....He could see the stars and yet he could not understand Kurumi's real feelings.

Leaving Shido's sense of helplessness aside, the countless stars in the sky banded together, forming a magnificent tapestry of light—this was the Milky Way. On both sides, there were two other stars that gave off a brilliance that outshone the other stars.

[—The daughter of the Heavenly Emperor who lived by the bank of the Amanogawa, Orihime, was a celestial maiden that was able to weave beautiful clothes.

However, after she married Hikoboshi the Cow Herder, Orihime no longer wove cloth, spending the whole day playing with Hikoboshi. The Heavenly Emperor was incensed when he saw this and separated the two in order for them to focus on their work.

From then on, the two lovers are only allowed to meet each other once a year, on the night of the seventh day of the seventh month. However if it rains on that day, then the Amanogawa would flood and they would be unable to cross——]

So that was what it was, narrating the origin of Tanabata, it does seem fitting of the festive mood.

Shido stealthily peeked to his right once more, yet he was caught off guard by Kurumi's eyes meeting his.

"——!"

".....Fufu."

Shido couldn't help but feel his heart jump, however Kurumi did not seem to notice as she revealed a bright smile, she silently overlapped Shido's hand with hers. The back of his hand was enveloped in a soft yet cool sensation, Shido's heart skipped a beat.

"Ku, Kurumi.....?"

He wanted to ask her a question, but her gaze had already returned to the starry ceiling.

Kurumi paid no heed to Shido's fluster, slowly parting her soft lips.

"Hey——Shido-san."

"Wh, what is it.....?"

"Hikoboshi and Orihime, they are separated by the Milky way, only allowed to meet once a year, is that right?"

".....Yeah, that's correct."

"However, if it rains on Tanabata, then this once in a year opportunity would be lost."

"Yeah.....there are a lot of interpretations regarding this.....but this is true for most myths."

Hearing Shido's words, Kurumi took a shallow breath as though thinking of something before continuing to speak.

"If.....and only if, one year, another year and the year after that.....if rain continues to fall on Tanabata, the Amanogawa that separates the two will continue to flood.....then the two lovers, are they still able to continue to think of each other?"

"Eh.....?"

Faced with such a sudden question, Shido couldn't help but tilt his head in wonder.

"Why the sudden question?"

"Time is more gentle than anything. Even though the two of them will lose this once in a year opportunity to meet, that sadness will heal as time passes.

However time is also more cruel than any other, even though the two lovers have pledged their love for all eternity, that pure emotion will fade away into dust in the flow of time. That one instant where their existence are recognized by each other are being constantly taken away by fate, just how long will the lover that resides in their heart exist till?"

"That really is.....a difficult question to answer."

Shido's face took on a troubled expression as he replied, there was no correct answer when it comes to this type of question.

However, Kurumi did not back down as she continued to look at Shido, it was as though she was waiting for Shido to give her an answer. That serious gaze of hers, made Shido slightly afraid.

"Gah——.....Kurumi?"

"Yes."

"I'm not Hikoboshi nor Orihime. What I am going to say next, I hope you will take it as my personal opinion."

"Alright."

"I think, that they would probably never forget each other."

Hearing his statement, Kurumi curiously tilted her head in his direction.

"Why would you think of it that way?"

"Just think about it, the two of them forget about their work because their relationship was so good, resulting in their separation right? If it weren't some disastrous issue, how could they forget themselves?"

".....Is that so."

Kurumi's melancholic reply had a sigh mixed in. It seems that this reply did not make her satisfied.

However, Shido was not done speaking, he shook his head and continued.

"Don't be hasty, I have proof to what I just said."

"Proof.....you say?"

"That's right. I think.....The two of them, are actually constantly meeting in secret."

"Huh?"

Kurumi was caught off guard as she widened her eyes.

"What do you mean by that? Aren't the two of them being separated by the Amanogawa?"

"No, if you think about it, Hikoboshi's——also known as the Cow Herder Star's other name is Aquila— it's the alpha star of the Eagle constellation. Since it's an eagle, it will just fly across the Amanogawa just by flapping its wings. The two of them must be meeting secretly behind the Heavenly Emperor's back. Therefore, how would they forget about each other."

"....."

Hearing Shido's words, Kurumi was speechless as she widened her eyes for a moment——

"He, hehe.....haha, ahahahaha."

Not long after, she began to laugh uncontrollably.

It was not the gentle, discreet giggle that she had used till now but a loud laughter.

Irritation started to show from the surroundings in the form of coughs, glares of complaint stabbed at the two of them like needles. Despite all of this, Kurumi continued to laugh.

"Um.....Kurumi, I think it's better if we left first, alright?!"

Saying that, Shido helped Kurumi to stand up. Although Kurumi was still in bursts of laughter, she still obediently listened to Shido's suggestion.

As Shido repeatedly bowed his head in apology to the visitors around them, he led Kurumi out of the dark hall.

"Haa—.....Fufu, that was really funny. I understand now.....indeed, Shido-san does have a point."

".....Actually I had no intention of making you laugh. Since you are done, then shall we go back in again?"

At Shido's inquiry, Kurumi however shook her head from side to side.

"It is enough. This aside——I wish to write on tanzaku. By writing my wish on that and hanging it on a bamboo shoot, it will come true, is that correct?"

"Although I don't know how true is that.....Hm, tanzaku huh, If that's the case, then let's go to the shopping district, there are massive bamboos planted there. Tanzaku are distributed for free as well, shall we go together?"

"Yes, I can't wait."

Kurumi showed an adorable smile, hugging tightly onto Shido's arm once more.

"Hey, hey....."

Shido wanted to resist for an instant.....however he immediately realized that such resistance is futile, thus he let Kurumi hold on to his arm as they left the planetarium together.

Following that, they walked back onto the route that they came from.

Looking at his watch after leaving the building, the time had just passed six in the evening. The sky has started to take on a crimson hue, the shadows of the two were drawn out on the ground.

.....It's going to be dinner time soon, the hungry Tohka must be ranting for dinner at the Itsuka residence already. But it is impossible for him to escape from Kurumi at present. Most importantly——regarding the present Kurumi and the one he had met last time, Shido was unable to leave her be.

Just as they were about to turn into the shopping district, Kurumi suddenly cried out in surprise, stopping in her tracks.

"Gah.....what's the matter?"

"Shido-san, look at that"

Shido looked in the direction indicated by Kurumi.

Over there, was a small wedding store, on the signboard had the words [Try on a wedding gown free!] written on it.

"I've always wanted to try one. Before we go back to the shopping district, may we go there and take just a little peek?"

"This is.....but I'm still a high school student. Then again why are you suddenly so interested in that sort of thing....."

"....."

Hearing Shido say that, Kurumi suddenly looked crestfallen, showing a lonesome expression.

".....That's because I wish to have more memories with Shido-san. At the same time—I hoped that Shido-san would be able to take away memories of being with me as well."

"Eh?"

Hearing Kurumi say words that did not sound like her at all, Shido couldn't help but raise an eyebrow.

".....Can't we, please?"

"Guh....."

Looking at Kurumi's moist eyes, Shido couldn't find it in his heart to say no to her.

"I, I got it already. Then let's just ask them. If they refuse, then you have to give up, alright?"

"! Yes, yes! I'm so happy!"

Kurumi's expression instantly brightened up.

That pure and innocent look, caused Shido to lose all intention of resisting, he had no choice but to walk to the wedding store with Kurumi.

"Shido-san.....where are you?"

It was evening. Under the twilight glow, Yoshino was currently walking through the shopping district.

The small figure of the girl was hidden under the straw hat's large brim. Her two sapphire blue pupils as well as the funny looking rabbit puppet on her left hand [Yoshinon] were her key features.

"Yeah, that's right, did something happen to him....."

"Hmph, he's probably mulling over what to make for dinner in front of the stalls. Let's find him quickly and go home."

As though they were replying to Yoshino's outspoken thoughts, the two girls walking in front of her spoke.

One of the girls had hair as dark as night, a girl with crystal-like eyes——Tohka. The other girl had her hair tied into two ponytails with black ribbons, having a haughty expression——Kotori.

That's correct, originally dinner was supposed to be at the Itsuka residence, but Shido who had left earlier to buy dinner ingredients have yet to return and is unable to be contacted. As such Yoshino as well as Tohka and Kotori who were worried set out together to the shopping district to find him.

"Hm?"

All of a sudden, Tohka's eyebrow twitched, she patted Kotori on the shoulder and asked.

"Kotori, Kotori."

"Hm? What is it? Have you found Shido already?"

"No, I haven't.....I just wanted to know, what is that?"

Saying that, Tohka pointed in the direction of the street.

Over there, numerous bamboos were placed alongside the street. For some reason, the branches of the bamboos had countless strips of paper attached onto them.

"Oh.....Those are wishing tanzaku. That means, that today is Tanabata."

"Tanzaku? Tanabata?"

"Yeah. Tanabata's custom is to write your wishes onto strips of paper called Tanzaku and hang them on the bamboo, then your wishes would be granted."

"! Wh, what did you say.....!"

Hearing Kotori's explanation, Tohka's eyes started to glow.

"Ko.....Kotori!"

".....Alright alright, it's okay, you can go and give it a try."

"Ye, yeah!"

Kotori expressed her approval as though she had seen through everything, Tohka on the other hand, nodded her head vigorously before running to the bamboos.

Looking at Tohka's figure, Kotori turned her gaze towards Yoshino.

"If that's the case, then Yoshino should go as well."

"Eh.....I, I can, go too.....?"

"Yeah, of course. Although its a different case altogether whether it will come true or not, but since this comes once a year, you should go and experience it for yourself."

"Al, alright.....!"

As such, Yoshino followed Kotori to the main street, retrieving two free tanzaku, taking up the organizer's pen, she wrote down her wish alongside [Yoshino].

"Oooh, what did everyone wish for?"

At this point, Tohka who had finished writing her wish a step ahead of the others sneaked a peek at Kotori's tanzaku.

".....Uh!"

At that, Kotori went into a fluster, hastily rubbing off the wish that was half-finished.

"Uh? What's wrong, Kotori."

"It's, it's nothing. I written it wrong, just a mistake."

Kotori said a vague line as she began to rewrite her wish in the space that was left.

"Hm? This wish seems a bit different from just now?"

"! It's just your imagination! Ri, right, Yoshino's done too right!? Let's hurry and put these up and find Shido!"

"Hm? Oh, ooh....."

"O, okay....."

Tohka and Yoshino hurriedly nodded their heads after succumbing to Kotori's pressuring.

After everyone had written their wishes down on their tanzaku, they made their way through the crowd.

"Phew.....But, it's going to take a lot of effort, to find Shido in this crowd. There's no other way then, let's split up and search. I'll go to the north section of the street, Tohka will go to the south, Yoshino will circle around the area to search. If you still haven't found him in 30 minutes, come back here to regroup, understand?"

"Yeah, I got it!"

"O, okay.....We understand."

[OK——Leave it to us——!]

Tohka, Yoshino as well as [Yoshinon] nodded their heads.

"Good.....then, let the searching start!"

At Kotori's signal, the three girls plus one rabbit went off into their respective search zones.

Yoshino's area was the commercial district on the boundary of the shopping district. Compared to the large street, there's less human traffic here, there's a lesser chance of bumping into people distributing tissue papers or passers-by. Kotori must have thought about this beforehand for Yoshino's sake.

After silently thanking Kotori, Yoshino started to look for Shido.

".....Shido-san, I hope you didn't get into any trouble."

Yoshino said to herself. However at this point, [Yoshinon] on her left hand suddenly laughed "Oo——hohoho".

[Well——danger aside——he could very well have ran into that you know——?]

"That.....?"

[I'm talking about women—Women. Ah—Shido-kun is a sex maniac!]

Saying that, [Yoshinon] covered its face with both hands, twisting its body while acting shy.

Yoshino showed a bitter smile, but before she could reply [Yoshinon]—

"Eh.....?"

The next instant, she widened her eyes, standing rooted to the spot.

The reason for that was simple. She saw Shido and a girl whom she did not recognize together on the street.

"Th, that was....."

[It's Shido-kun—Uhwoo—What a girl! Shido-kun really is something!]

"Ho, how can this be....."

Yoshino's voice started to tremble. Shido and the girl walked straight towards a building.

—That place was, a wedding store.

"Eh.....!?"

[Hyuuuu—]

Yoshino did not understand the full details, but she had heard previously, that marriage, was the act of two people pledging their love for each other forever and living with each other under one roof.

—Don't tell me, Shido-san really.....?

".....Uu."

Yoshino held her breath, sneaking around behind corners while inching closer to the store that the two had entered.

Peeking inwards from the entrance into the building she saw Shido negotiating with the receptionist about something, the girl on the other hand was waiting behind him.

Black silk-like hair, perfect features, this girl was beautiful to the point of making her feel frightened.

"Shi, Shido-san.....Why, are you here."

".....Ara?"

Just as Yoshino was focusing on this girl in bewilderment, the girl noticed Yoshino's gaze, walking towards her.

"Good evening, do you want something from me?"

"Hyi....."

Suddenly being engaged in a conversation by a stranger caused the timid Yoshino to jump.

However, now wasn't the time to be afraid, Yoshino gathered all the courage that she had and opened her trembling mouth.

"U, um.....Can I ask what is your relationship, with Shido-san....."

Hearing Yoshino mention Shido's name made the girl widen her eyes in surprise.

"You know Shido-san? Ara.....? Then again, did I meet you somewhere.....?"

The girl mumbled to herself while in thought, slightly nodding her head a few times after a while.

".....?"

"Aaah, don't mind me. Besides, don't you want to know what sort of relationship.....Shido-san and I are in?"

"Ye.....yeah....."

Yoshino lightly nodded, at that the girl's mouth had a hint of an evil smile.

"Regarding this, how should I put this. I guess it would be like destiny that can't be severed, a passion that cannot be separated.....In conclusion, it's a special relationship that cannot be interfered by anyone hm?"

"Eh? Eh.....?"

The girl's words made Yoshino go into shock. However the girl continued to speak while enjoying Yoshino's reaction.

"I know everything there is to know about Shido-san including every inch of his body, that's because I have carefully inspected him thoroughly just like licking him all over. Aaah.....That time when we met last month, what a passionate night that was. Just as I was confiding to Shido, a burning object entered my body.....Fufufu, I'll have to make him take responsibility for that."

"Th, that....."

"Aaah, that's right. The underwear that I'm wearing right now is also picked for me by Shido-san himself. If you don't mind, do you want to have a look?"

Saying that, the girl pinched the edges of her skirt, slowly lifting them upwards.

".....!?"

Yoshino's mind went blank, the world began to spin, she did not give herself time to think, her legs had already taken her away.

"Fufufu, good day to you then."

The girl bemusedly called out, but Yoshino did not have any strength to turn her head. She did not have time to sort out her thoughts, she only thought of leaving this place as soon as possible.

"Somehow.....this makes one feel uneasy....."

Shido said to himself, whilst adjusting his tie in the changing room located within the wedding store.

This can't be helped, for men who were going to wear a white tuxedo for the first time in their life, most of them would probably think the same thing as well.

That's right, in conclusion, although Shido and Kurumi are lovers in highschool, they have received permission to try out the wedding gown.

No, to put it across more accurately, from the beginning, the female receptionist had a troubled expression on her face, however after Kurumi whispered something to her, she immediately had a change in attitude, becoming extremely cooperative. In short.....she even allowed him to try out the white tuxedo.

"That girl Kurumi, what on earth did she say.....?"

Shido heaved a huge sigh——suddenly remembering something.

"Ah.....then that means, I can use my handphone!"

Being led around by Kurumi all this time made Shido's thinking slow. Shido took out his handphone from his clothes on the hanger, opening it, he noticed the numerous missed calls displayed on the screen. It seems that he had made his family worried.

"In any case, let's just call Kotori first....."

However, just as Shido was about to send a message over, the door of the changing room opened with a bang, the receptionist who had been sitting in the waiting rushed in.

"Come on hurry up, the bride has already finished preparing! May the groom proceed in here!"

Saying that, she enthusiastically pulled Shido's hand.

"Wah, hold on?"

Shido who was caught off guard couldn't even resist, he was dragged out of the room without even being able to make a call.

Just like that he was led through the corridor, all the way till the door of another changing room did the receptionist let go of his arm.

"Come, please enter."

"Ah, um....."

Shido listlessly replied, raising his hand to open the door.

"———"

Kurumi who was standing right in the center of the changing room entered his sights, Shido was instantly rendered speechless.

Contrary to her usual image, a pure white wedding gown enveloped her lithe body, a thin layer of makeup covered her face——in the presence of such astounding beauty, Shido was unable to come up with any words.

"Fufu.....being stared at like this, I'll get embarrassed as well."

"! Ah, this.....s, sorry. That was because you were.....you are, really too beautiful."

"Is that so, I appreciate the compliment."

As soon as Shido replied, Kurumi's face took on a pale pink shade, showing a graceful smile. For some reason, the staff member behind him keep sniffing from an overflow of emotions, at the same time taking out her handkerchief and dabbing at her eyes.

".....Hey, Kurumi, what did you say to her?"

"Aaah, that miss over there? Nothing much, I only said 'I don't have long to live due to a terminal disease. I'm afraid that I won't last till the age that we would be able to swear to spend our lives together. She was so regretful of that fact, that she wanted to let me have the chance to wear a wedding gown at least.', with that she became extremely caring..... "

".....Wait, isn't all of that a lie?"

"Fufufu, I wonder?"

Shido pointed with judging eyes, however Kurumi merely laughed.

At this, the female receptionist who was still weeping loudly sniffed a few times, she started to urge Shido and Kurumi.

"Alright alright, please proceed to the wedding hall, we provide photo taking as well."

"Eh.....No, no need, it's enough for us.

"What are you saying! This could be.....it could be her last chance.....!"

After crying out, the staff member used her handkerchief to cover her face as she wept uncontrollably. It seems that she's the type that will be easily brought to tears.

"Isn't it fine like this, Shido-san. Furthermore I too.....wish to take a wedding photo together with Shido-san."



".....Uu, um——"

Is this really okay.....Although Shido was hesitant, but he couldn't very well say "It's all a lie" at this point of time, more importantly, there's no reason to refuse Kurumi's wish just because of this reason alone.

As such, under the urging of the receptionist, Shido and Kurumi both went through the corridor.

After stepping out from the building's rear door, they reached a wide area that looked like a courtyard.

This was a quiet area that was away from the hustle and bustle of the city. And in the centre, a church was built. Under the illumination of the setting evening sun, the entire space looked like it was being painted with a vermilion glow.

Although it was small, it was a church that had been carefully maintained. Opening the chocolate colored door, the crimson carpet extended all the way to the interior of the church with rows of long benches on both side, what entered their eyes soon after was the altar that was placed inside the church, the huge crucifix as well as the brilliance of the stained glass windows.

"Come! Please stand in front of the altar! Leave the photo taking to me!"

"O, oh, thank you."

"Fufufu, we're leaving it to you then."

A digital single lens reflex camera was in the hands of the staff, under her instructions, Shido and Kurumi stood side by side in front of the altar.

"Well then, will the two please face over here. A little closer, groom, please smile!"

"Ha, haha....."

After being pointed out, Shido made a half-hearted smile. At the same time, his ear heard the snapping sound of the shutter.

Not knowing how long she had ran after leaving the store, Yoshino accidentally ran into something soft.

"Kya.....!"

"Yoshino? What's wrong, why are you so flustered?"

Looks like she ran into Tohka. Tohka looked at Yoshino, tilting her head in wonder.

"To, Tohka.....san. Shido, san.....is going....."

"Uh? Did something happen to shido?"

Looking at the panting Yoshino, the young maiden——Tohka frowned slightly.

"Ye, yeah.....actually....."

When Yoshino finally calmed down, she started to reiterate to Tohka what she saw just now.

"Wh, what.....? shido is going to marry a girl who flipped her skirt.....?"

Tohka raised her eyebrows in confusion.

However this was unavoidable, since Yoshino who witnessed the scene too had difficulty in understanding what she just saw.

At this moment.

"Ah.....Tohka, Yoshino. How was it at your end? Did you find Shido?"

Just as the two girls were looking at each other helplessly, Kotori met up with them as well.

"Ohhh, Kotori. Actually, Yoshino seemed to have found shido....."

"! Really? Where did you see him?"

"Hm, speaking of this, it seems that shido flipped the skirt of a cute girl, they spent a passionate night together, so now he's being asked to take responsibility by marrying her or something."

"Ah.....?"

Hearing Tohka's words, Kotori was instantly rendered speechless. However in the next instant, her cheeks blushed red, rage was evident from her countenance.

"Ar.....Are you kidding me! S-Shido's getting married!? Wh, w-w-what on earth is going on!?"

"I'm, i'm not too sure as well....."

"What kind of joke is this! Where did this vixen come from! How dare she seduce my onii-chan!"

Kotori yelled aloud, repeatedly stomping the ground. After that she threw a sharp glare at Yoshino . That demonic expression made Yoshino cry out in terror.

"Where are they, Yoshino! Lead the way!"

"O-okay.....!"

Although Tohka's explanation was slightly different from what she said earlier.....But no matter, the current situation still requires the assistance of the two.

Yoshino along with Tohka and Kotori, sprinted back to the way she came from.

After the photo shoot, the two of them got changed, leaving the wedding store behind them. At this time the surroundings have already taken on the colour of dusk.

That being said, he couldn't just leave Kurumi with just that. The special date that Kurumi had requested was still not completely over.

That's right, Shido is currently walking on the dark road of the shopping district alongside Kurumi in order to fulfill her wish of writing on tanzaku.

"....."

Shido silently glanced at Kurumi who was walking beside him.

Kurumi was delicately hugging the photo that was given to them from the wedding store (Furthermore, it really looked like a real wedding photo, expensive interleaving paper was used—and it was all for free), at the same time she was happily humming to a tune.

After that, she would occasionally open the paper, sneaking a peek at the wedding photo of the two and showing a delighted smile.

.....The current Kurumi, made Shido even more confused.

She was the most dangerous spirit known, a girl who that everyone should be wary of.

However, at least Kurumi right now, no matter how you look at it seems like she only wants to have a date with Shido today.

"Ah, Shido-san, please look over there."

As though stopping Shido from thinking too much, Kurumi spoke to him.

"Hm.....?"

Hearing that, Shido raised his head. He saw many thick bamboos placed alongside the stores of the shopping district, the leaves extending towards the night sky. There were already countless tanzaku hung on the branches, creating a colourful sight.

"Wah, that really looks beautiful."

"Yeah.....Look, they seem to be giving out tanzaku there. Didn't you come over for that reason?"

"Yeah, I'll just help myself then——Isn't Shido-san going to write one too?"

"Eh, no, I'll just....."

"It's a rare chance after all, will you write it together with me?"

Kurumi gently smiled, taking Shido's hand in hers. Just like that he was pulled by Kurumi, walking next to the bamboos.

The dense number of bamboo leaves were just like a curtain. Long tables were placed below the bamboos to allow people to write their tanzaku more easily.

Shido and Kurumi both took tanzaku from the staff members, after taking out pens from a makeshift pen holder from a plastic bottle with its top cut off, they started to think of what to write.

"A wish.....huh."

Although he did have wishes,.....but when he wanted to write them down, he found it difficult to decide.

As such, Shido naturally thought, what did the others write, at the same time he looked up.

"Hm.....?"

Amongst the few tanzaku that he saw, a familiar name was seen.

[I want to eat Katsu-karē for dinner tonight. Yatogami Tohka]

"T-that girl.....when did she come here?"

Judging from that distinct handwriting, it was definitely written by Tohka herself. Shido scratched his cheek in suspicion, deciding in his heart—he will remember to buy ingredients for Katsu-karē on his way home.

Following that, looking beside the tanzaku, he saw others.

[I wish that I can speak to people in the eye. Yoshino]

[I wish that Yoshino will be happy. Yoshinon]

"Haha....."

Looking at such heartwarming wishes, Shido couldn't help but smile. It seems that Yoshino and [Yoshinon] came here with Tohka.

"Then, probably....."

Shido continued to look at other tanzaku.

[I wish that Shido would be more useful. Itsuka Kotori]

"T-that girl....."

That was definitely Shido's sister·Kotori's tanzaku. Shido's facial muscles twitched, his eyebrows started creasing — Suddenly, he noticed that there seemed to be smudges on the right side of her wish.

"....."

It was very unlikely that that imouto-sama would write incorrectly. She probably wrote some unsightly insults, so she had no choice but to rewrite.

Shido heaved a sigh, at the same time using his finger to scratch his face before turning to look at his tanzaku once more.

Looks like there was no need to be overly serious. Shido intended to write [I wish that all Spirits will obtain happiness]—before recalling that the existence of [Spirits] is a secret.

So, he changed his words to read [I wish that spacequakes would not occur again, let there be peace on earth.]. Although it sounds more subtle, the meaning behind it is generally the same.

"Let's leave it like that....."

Saying that, Shido turned to look at Kurumi's direction.

To be honest, in regards to what wish she would be writing, it would be impossible not to feel curious.

"Kurumi, what did you write?"

As he spoke, Shido glanced at the tanzaku in her hands. However Kurumi immediately flipped that tanzaku over, preventing him from seeing it.

"Fufu, that's a no no, you dare peek at a maiden's secrets, Shido-san is a mean person."

Kurumi displayed an alluring smile, raising her index finger, swiftly pressing onto Shido's lips.

"You.....!"

"Fufu, Shido-san's reaction is really cute."

"D-don't tease me anymore."

Shido wiped his lips with his arm, Kurumi on the other hand started to happily giggle.

"Never mind that, in short, you're done as well right? Then let's hang our tanzaku on the branches."

Hearing his words, Kurumi obediently nodded her head.

"Yeah, then where shall we hang it?"

"Well.....there's a saying, the closer you hang it to the heavens, the higher the chance that the wish would come true....."

"Closer to the heavens.....then that means, over there?"

Kurumi pointed up to the sky, over there, a massive bamboo with a height taller than the roof of the building swayed with the wind. Such a height, no man could reach, so there were no tanzaku hung.

"Um, that really is high.....but that's too dangerous. Look, there's some space on the bamboo over there, let's hang it there."

"Mm, alright."

Shido and Kurumi both held their tanzaku in their hands, walking forwards under the cover of the leaves.

Nearing the end of the road, one could see that there was still space to hang tanzaku.

"Yeah, then let's hang these here."

Saying that, Shido stretched out his hand, hanging his tanzaku onto the branch.

However, Kurumi still held onto her tanzaku, not moving from her spot. Shido saw that, tilting his head in confusion.

"Kurumi? What's wrong with you?"

Hearing his words, Kurumi weakly smiled before slowly speaking.

"Shido-san.....You had said it before right, Hikoboshi and Orihime, no matter how many years of rain, would never forget each other."

"Eh? Yeah.....I did say that."

Hearing that, Kurumi, as though wishing to deeply remember this sentence, drooped her head, continuing to speak.

"Hey.....Shido-san. No matter how many years of rain, would Shido-san not forget about me too?"

"Eh?"

Such a sudden question, caused Shido to hesitate.

However, Kurumi did not seem to be making fun of him.

So, after Shido thought for a few seconds, he nodded to Kurumi.

"Yes, I won't forget you. Furthermore.....A girl with such a strong presence as you, I can't forget even if I wanted to."

Shido bitterly smiled as he replied.

"Is that so."

Hearing that, Kurumi let out a satisfied smile.

"What's with you.....what a strange fellow. Alright, let's hurry up and hang the tanzaku shall we? If you don't want me to look at what you wrote, I can step back for a while——"

"No."

However, Kurumi shook her head from side to side.

"Looks like.....time is already up."

"Time is.....up?"

Hearing Kurumi's words that held a deeper meaning, Shido couldn't help but frown.

And in the next instant——

"——I finally found you, [Me]."

From behind Kurumi——within the dark alley separated from the hustle and bustle of the busy street, he heard such a voice.

"What....."

After that, the moment he saw the figure that materialized, Shido was rendered speechless.

It was a beautiful, wearing a long skirt that had vermillion and black interwoven like blood and shadow, black hair tied into two uneven bunches on both sides, as well as heterochromatic eyes. Furthermore, that face——

There was no question about it, it was Kurumi herself.

The Kurumi who was standing in the shadows, parted her lips slightly.

"You really went and done some selfish things.....But, it all ends here. A clone that doesn't obey my will, will only stand in my way if you exist."

"A, clone.....!?"

Shido widened his eyes, looking at the Kurumi who was holding her tanzaku.

Kurumi was able to extract as well as hide copies of her past self in her shadows completely, that was something that he had understood last month.

——But, don't tell me, the Kurumi that was with him the entire day all this while, was actually a clone.

Shido's head was in a midst of chaos. On the other hand, standing in the shadows——Kurumi's [real body] bent her knees slightly while pinching the ends of her skirt, bowing to Shido.

"It's really been a while, Shido-san. I'm really sorry, my incompetent clone seemed to have given you some trouble."

"This, what on earth is going on?"

Shido's confusion could be told from his expression. Hearing such a question, the real Kurumi looked at her clone from the corner of her eye, lazily starting to explain.

"I've said it before right, my clones are my past, my experiences. The [Tokisaki Kurumi] standing over there is the same, she was taken out of a random instant of my past, another personality. It's just that, the instant where I had taken her out from was really from a terrible moment."

"Terrible.....?"

The real Kurumi nodded her head.

"That [Me] was when I was replenishing my clones.....I accidentally recreated her from the time when Shido-san was talking to my other self on the roof last month.....I really don't know whether it can be counted as a prank from god."

"Wha——"

Shido was speechless.

He still recalled clearly.

Last month, on top of Raizen High School, Shido and Kurumi had indeed spoken to each other.

Not only did the Kurumi of that time expand a barrier within the school, she also attempted to trigger a spacequake. Shido on the other hand successfully persuaded her to stop, but the moment Kurumi was about to reciprocate his feelings——

At that moment, the original Kurumi showed up, and killed that Kurumi.

"Then that means, you're Kurumi, from that time.....?"

"....."

Kurumi did not reply, she merely revealed a sad smile.

Looking at her, the real Kurumi impatiently sighed.

"I'm really sorry, a clone that doesn't listen to my orders cannot be left alone——especially [Me] who already had developed feelings for Shido-san."

Saying that, the real Kurumi slowly raised her right arm, and ——swiftly formed a fist.

Following that, Kurumi's feet sprouted countless pale arms, slowly pulling her into the darkness.

"Ku——Kurumi.....!"

Shido hastily extended his arm, hoping to grab Kurumi's hand——However it was already too late.

"Shido-san. Today——I was happy, really....."

Kurumi did not make any form of resistance, she let the white arms wrap around herself, until her figure was completely submerged by the darkness.

It was as though.....she had already known that she would meet such an end from the start.

"Kuru, mi....."

".....Killing the same [Me] twice, what an unpleasant feeling."

The real Kurumi said as such, at the same time she pinched her skirt just like before, dipping her head and making a bow.

"I've done what I'm here to do for today. I originally wished to talk more with Shido-san....."

The real Kurumi said while looking behind Shido.

Almost simultaneously——

"shido——!"

"Back off!"

A familiar voice sounded out, in the next instant, Tohka and Kotori suddenly appeared, standing in front of Shido.

"T-Tohka——Kotori?"

Shido called out their names in surprise. He had just finished speaking, Yoshino too arrived beside. Although Yoshino widened her eyes due to her not being able to understand the situation, but upon looking at the strong reactions of Tohka and Kotori, she took Shido's hand in hers in a bid to protect him.

"Kurumi.....! Don't you dare harm shido!"

"You have the guts to appear unannounced. What's the matter today? If you intend to obediently surrender, then I'll be merciful and listen to your pleas of forgiveness."

Hearing Tohka and Kotori's words, Kurumi shook her head in exasperation, turning to look at Shido once more.

"——It is unfortunate that the terrifying Spirit of flames is here to interrupt, I'll take my leave here——Take care, Shido-san."

Saying that, Kurumi's figure disappeared into the darkness.

Almost instantly, all the tension in the air evaporated as well.

At the same time, Tohka who was standing in front of Shido turned around.

"s-shido! Are you alright!"

".....Yeah, I'm fine."

Shido replied in a low voice, before gritting his teeth, forcefully smashing his fist onto the ground.

"Kurumi.....!"

Last month, the clone who was killed by the real Kurumi.

It was a mystery as to why she reappeared in front of Shido.

Her true intention, is still unknown even till now.

But——the only thing he can understand is.

Even though that Kurumi knew that she would once again be killed by the real Kurumi, she still chose to meet with Shido.

Just for a few hours of memories, she chose to defy the absolute will of [Herself].

".....!!"

An indescribable feeling surged within him, Shido once again swung his fist.

"s-shido....."

Tohka called out his name out of concern.

However, Shido's head was still in a mess. Many kinds of emotions broiled into a chaotic whirlpool, causing rational thought to be impossible.

At that moment.

".....Shido. what's that?"

Kotori's voice sounded out to him from behind.

Hearing that, Shido raised his head slightly—opening his eyes.

At the spot where the Kurumi clone was consumed by the shadows, the interleaving paper containing the photo was left, as well as —a small strip of paper.

"Tan, zaku....."

Looking at that, Shido unsteadily stood up, picking up the tanzaku that had fallen to the ground.

After that, he looked at the words written on it.

"....."

Shido bit down hard, as though attempting to draw blood from his gums. He held the tanzaku in his hand, wordlessly walking down the street.

"Ah.....shido! Where are you going!"

Tohka's voice sounded out from behind him, but Shido ignored her, tearing a path through the crowd, he continued to walk forward.

Finally, he arrived in front of the tallest bamboo that Kurumi had said earlier, holding the tanzaku in his mouth, he climbed the nearby telephone pole to the building's roof.

His actions quickly attracted the attention of nearby visitors, murmurings started to sound out from the ground.

However Shido did not take them to heart, he stepped onto the roof, extending his hand to the largest branch on the bamboo.

And then, while maintaining an unnatural position, he hung the tanzaku in his mouth on the very top of the bamboo.

However,

"Wah.....!"

The instant he hung the tanzaku onto the branch, Shido's foot lost its balance, he fell from the roof. His vision started to spin violently, the murmurings of the crowd turned into screams.

"shido——!"

However, at the same time he heard the voice, a second before Shido's body hit the ground, he was caught firmly. Looks like Tohka who had caught up had saved his life.

"Are you okay, shido!"

"Oh, yeah.....I'm saved, Tohka."

"What's the matter with you, running off like that."

"Aaah.....I'm here to hang the tanzaku."

"Hm?"

Tohka frowned, raising her head and looking up.

On the very top of the tallest bamboo, the lone tanzaku was right there swaying in the wind.

"Hanging it over there? Uh, that really was dangerous."

"Yeah.....I'm sorry. But.....it's just that that wish, I'd like that to come true no matter what."

Saying that, Shido followed Tohka and looked upwards——in the swaying bamboo leaves, the hint of a small single tanzaku could be glimpsed.

[I wish that one day, I will be able to meet Shido-san once more. Tokisaki Kurumi]

"I won't forget you.....How could I possibly, forget about you."

Shido clenched his fist, looking at the night sky as though making a pledge.

In the midst of the glittering sea of stars, a small single shooting star, flew across the sky, as though flying across the Milky way.